

# NORTHWOODS JOURNAL — JULY 2023

*A Free Publication about Enjoying and Protecting Marinette County's Outdoor Life*

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## Summer Conservation Staff at the Land Information Department

This summer, the Marinette County Land Information Department has three conservation LTEs (limited term employees) to help with various projects. Aquatic Invasive species management, habitat and water quality monitoring, education presentations, and assisting department staff with various tasks will keep them busy all season. Two of the positions are funded by a grant from the WDNR for monitoring a new aquatic invasive species, European Frogbit.

Boulin Beck is returning from last year – she was featured in the May Northwoods Journal. She has been working on culvert inventories, helping with pike surveys, education programs, and other projects since early May.



Boulin taught several sessions about groundwater at Harmony Arboretum for the Crivitz 3<sup>rd</sup> grade's visit in late May – her activity was creating an 'edible aquifer' – an educational treat for the students!

Our other two summer conservation LTEs started May 31<sup>st</sup> - here is a little bit about each of them.



Hello, my name is Dalanie Langlois and I grew up in Marinette. Ever since I was a little kid, I always loved nature, exploring, and being outdoors. I pretty much grew up on the Peshtigo River and Seagull Bar because my family loves the water and my dad has a strong passion for duck hunting. I also learned to paddle board and kayak at a young age because of how much time we spent on the water.

I just finished my first year of college and I am majoring in Environmental Science. This summer I am working with Marinette County as a Conservation LTE focusing on the invasive species known as European Frog Bit. I am very excited to work with them and expand my knowledge while helping spread information about this aquatic species to the community and surrounding areas.



Hello, my name is Jordan Carvenough and I grew up in Marinette County. Throughout my childhood I was introduced to nature through hunting and fishing. With this, I found that I was able to learn about how living things interacted with each other. This was the beginning of my passion for the nature around me.

I am currently a sophomore at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, studying Geographical Information Science and minoring in Earth Science. Through this I have found I can still work with nature and create maps showing relationships between nature and space. This will be my first summer working as a Conservation LTE for the Marinette Land Information Department. I am excited to be out in the field learning about the threats of invasive species, specifically European Frog-bit.

The mission of the Marinette County Land Information Department is to promote the protection, restoration and wise use of our land & water resources. Our department includes zoning/surveying, sanitation, property listing, landfill management, agricultural programs, land & water conservation, land records/GIS mapping, Marinette County Extension, and more.

To contact our department with related concerns or questions, call our office at 715-732-7780 or visit us online at <https://www.marinettecounty.com/departments/land-information/general-information/> or on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Marinette-County-Land-Water-Conservation/10007527761451/>.



## Printed Northwoods Journals Return this Summer in Marinette County



The July & August issues of the *Northwoods Journal* will be available at various locations throughout Marinette County. Printed issues will be available at county parks & campgrounds, restaurants, gas stations, libraries, tourism centers, and businesses throughout the County. Copies are also available at the County Courthouse and the County Resources Center in Marinette. A PDF version is available online at <https://www.marinettecounty.com/departments/land-information/environmental-education/northwoods-journal/>.








## Celebrate National Moth Week July 22-30!

<https://nationalmothweek.org/>



**National Moth Week** celebrates the beauty, life cycles, and habitats of moths. “Moth-ers” of all ages and abilities are encouraged to learn about, observe, and document moths in their backyards, parks, and neighborhoods. *National Moth Week is being held, worldwide, during the last full week of July.* NMW offers everyone, everywhere a unique opportunity to become a Citizen Scientist and contribute scientific data about moths. Through partnerships with major online biological data depositories, NMW participants can help map moth distribution and provide needed information on other life history aspects around the globe.

### Why moths?

-  Moths are among the most diverse and successful organisms on earth.
-  Scientists estimate there are 150,000 to more than 500,000 moth species.
-  Their colors and patterns are either dazzling or so cryptic that they define camouflage. Shapes and sizes span the gamut from as small as a pinhead to as large as an adult's hand.
-  Most moths are nocturnal, and need to be sought at night to be seen – others fly like butterflies during the day.
-  Finding moths can be as simple as leaving a porch light on and checking it after dark. Serious moth aficionados use special lights and baits to attract them.



### Finding moths

Observing moths is very easy; you don't even have to actively look for them. By using two simple methods to attract moths, all you have to do is wait for them to come to you. Moths are attracted to light (no one really knows why although there are a number of theories), and also to the smell of fermented sugar and ripe fruit – both food sources.

1. **Any type of light will attract moths.** Just [leave a porch light on](#) and wait and see what is attracted to it. If you are in a field or forest, you can use battery-operated lights or even a flashlight.

Entomologists use black lights and mercury vapor lights, which emit light in a color spectrum that moths find irresistible. These types of lights can be ordered online at relatively low cost.

2. **Moths need a surface to rest on.** White sheets are often used. Hang a sheet over clothes line or between two trees, and shine the light on it. An outside wall also works well if your light is set up near a house or a building.
3. **Wait for the moths to come to your light** so you can observe and photograph them.

### Sugaring for moths

1. **Moths can smell food from a distance.** When provided with fermented sugar and fruit, they will fly right to it. This method of attracting moth is simply called 'sugaring'. [Read more](#) about sugaring for moth and tips on how to from moth'ers.
2. **Make “moth food”** A mix of sugar, fruit (banana, peach or other overripe fruit) and beer will work. Try [Dave's not-so-secret recipe](#) or experiment with your own recipe.
3. **Brush the mix on tree trunks** an hour before dusk. **Check every 30 minutes** to see what's coming to the bait.

### Have fun!


- Invite your family and friends to join you for a mothing party. Enjoy moth-inspired food, watch the old flick *Mothra*, and tell mothing stories.
- If you are mothing with children, check out the [kids page](#) for more ideas.

### Finding moths during the day

- Moth that fly at night are settled down during the day in some hidden places.
- Keep an eye out for the amazing Sphinx moths, many species fly during the day.

### Collect data

- Photograph the moths you see. For more about photographic moths [click here](#). Submit moth photos to the [any of our partners](#).
- Upload your moth, setup, and people photos on the [National Moth Week Flickr group](#). To make your images available to be uploaded to the National Moth Week website, please set permissions to “Creative Commons,” or leave a note in the comment section giving permission.
- Tell us about your mothing events. Share your stories, recipes for moth-inspired foods, games, and whatever else. The best moth night stories will be featured on our blog.

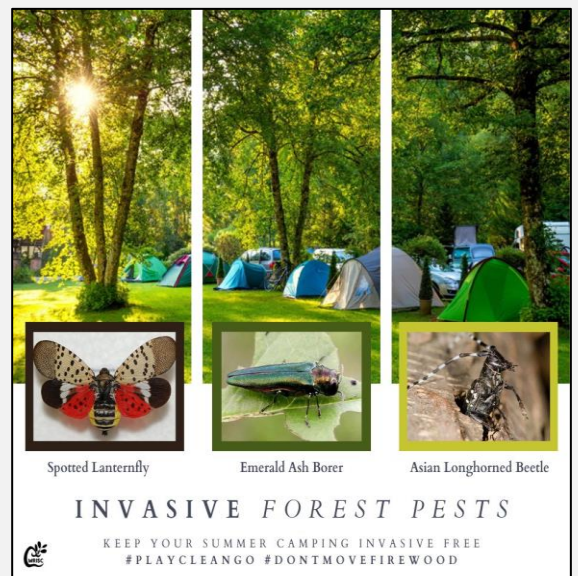
 <https://www.mothidentification.com/moth-in-us/moths-in-wisconsin>

 <https://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/>

 <https://www.butterflyidentification.org/moths.php>

 <https://www.birdsandblooms.com/gardening/garden-bugs/moth-pictures/>

**Help Keep Invasive Species from Spreading this Summer! Tips from the Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition**  
<https://www.facebook.com/WildRiversISC>  
 or <https://www.wrisc.org/>



Summer is a prime time for these destructive forest pests to hitch a ride to new locations. Here are some great tips from [PlayCleanGo](#) to prevent their spread!

### For firewood:

- Never bring firewood from home to your campsite. Buy it where you burn it.
- Don't move firewood further than 10 miles from where it originated.
- Leave any remaining firewood at the campsite or leave it with the camp host.

### If tent camping:

- Clean your tent and hammocks before packing up by brushing off any plant parts, seeds, and dirt.
- Sweep out or shake out the interior of the tent prior to packing.
- When you return home, set up tent, tarp, and hammocks to allow them to dry out and remove any remaining organic material.

### If RV Camping:

- Sweep out the RV interior prior to leaving.
- Look for suspicious splotches in your vehicles' wheel wells and underside. Egg masses of invasive insects could look like dried mud. Dispose of suspicious splotches in rubbing alcohol.
- Spray down your vehicle with water or compressed air to remove mud and plant parts from tires and fenders.



For more about preventing invasive species, visit <https://playcleango.org/>.





## Interesting Hummingbird Moth Facts

<https://www.birdsandblooms.com/gardening/garden-bugs/facts-about-hummingbird-moths/>



Sphinx moths are unique fliers that make many backyard gardeners say, "What was that thing?" At first glance, many think it's a hummingbird or bumblebee. The moths feed from flowers during the day and can hover just like hummingbirds. This ability has earned them the nickname 'hummingbird moth'. There are four types of hummingbird moths in North America: [hummingbird clearwing moths](#) (below), white-lined sphinx moths, snowberry clearwing moths and slender clearwing moths.



### Hummingbird Moths Are Also Known As Sphinx Moths and Hawk Moths

Hummingbird moths are also commonly known as [sphinx moths](#). Here's the fascinating reason why - when the caterpillars raise their heads, the rest of their body remains flat. They resemble the posture of the statue of the mythical Sphinx in Egypt that guards the pharaohs' tombs, like the snowberry clearwing moth larva below.



You may also know sphinx moths as hawk moths or hummingbird hawk moths, because their streamlined wings make them fast and agile fliers. They are also sometimes called bee moths or bee hawk moths.

### What Does a Hummingbird Moth Look Like?

Hummingbird moths have thick, fuzzy antennae that are wider at the top. Long hairs, not feathers, cover most of the body. They also have six legs, like all other insects. They also have clear patches on their wings. The wings of clear-winged sphinx moths, such as the snowberry clearwing, become clear soon after emerging from the cocoon. Their bodies are plump like bumblebees.

### What Does a Hummingbird Moth Caterpillar Look Like?

When full-grown, the caterpillars are about the size of your little finger and are smooth with a pointy horn at the tail end (see photo above).

### Hummingbird Moths Are Not Birds

At a glance, hummingbird moths can easily be

mistaken for their namesake. But hummingbird moths are insects, not birds. One way to tell the difference is their size. Hummingbird moths are smaller in size, at 1 to 2 inches long. Hummingbirds are typically 3 to 4 inches long.

### Are Hummingbird Moths Rare?

The two most common hummingbird moths you'll see in your garden are known as snowberry clearwings (below) and hummingbird clearwings. Slender clearwings are rare in parts of their range.



### Sphinx Moths Are Active at Night

If you spot a hummingbird-sized moth zip through your garden late at night, you're probably looking at a sphinx moth. These moths are active both day and night, so plant flowers that bloom after dark like moonflower to attract them.

### A Hummingbird Moth Can Hover Like a Hummingbird

Hummingbird moths have a tail that opens like a fan when they're hovering in the air to collect nectar from flowers, just like hummingbirds.

### Hummingbird Moths Feed on Nectar Flowers

Plant phlox, bee balm or any other pollinator favorites in your flower garden to attract hummingbird moths. Like butterflies, hummingbird moths have an extra-long proboscis to sip nectar, sometimes twice the length of their body. Sphinx moths prefer tube-shaped flowers with nectar in the base of the petals, such as columbines, nasturtiums and four-o'clocks.

### Hummingbird Moths Are Not Drawn to the Color Red

Unlike hummingbirds, hummingbird moths don't zero in on red flowers. Tubular blooms in any color lure day-fliers, while fragrant white or light-colored blossoms hail the sphinx moth squad in the evening by both sight and scent.

### Fast Top Flight Speed

These pollinators can really move! White-lined sphinx moths can fly 25 to 35 mph, very similar to the average speed of hummingbirds.



White-lined Sphinx moth

### Look for These Moths Worldwide

Hummingbird moth species are found on six continents.

For more about these interesting moths:

- <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/hummingbird-moth-hemaris-thysbe/>
- <https://uwm.edu/field-station/clearwing-moth/>

## Recovering America's Wildlife Act Reintroduced in Senate

<https://www.jsonline.com/story/sports/outdoors/2023/04/02/recovering-americas-wildlife-act-reintroduced-in-senate/70063924007/>



Sandhill cranes with chick

The **Recovering America's Wildlife Act** (RAWA), which narrowly missed passage in the previous Congress, was reintroduced in April in the Senate. The proposed legislation, which would provide \$1.4 billion annually to states and tribes to help non-game and at-risk wildlife, was reintroduced in the U.S. Senate by Sens. Martin Heinrich (D-New Mexico) with Thom Tillis (R-North Carolina). The concept for RAWA emerged from a 2016 Blue Ribbon Panel and has been introduced in four previous sessions of Congress. Last year it was passed by the House but failed to get approval in the Senate.

As with the previous version, the bill introduced last week would dedicate \$1.3 billion annually to state fish and wildlife agencies to implement their science-based wildlife action plans and an additional \$97.5 million for tribal fish and wildlife managers. It has bipartisan support and is strongly endorsed by conservation organizations. RAWA is supported by more than 60 tribes and 1,500 organizations representing state fish and wildlife agencies, sportsmen and women, conservation groups, industry associations and businesses, according to data provided by co-sponsor Heinrich.

Jennifer Morris, CEO of The Nature Conservancy, said more than one-third of America's fish and wildlife species are at risk of extinction, part of a global biodiversity decline threatening humans and nature alike. "This crisis demands immediate and substantial investment in strategies proven to slow, stop, and reverse this decline," Morris said in a statement. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would be the "shot in the arm" state and tribal wildlife agencies need to restore America's biodiversity, according to Morris.

**Wisconsin would receive about \$18 million annually according to a recent RAWA projection.** Mark LaBarbera, executive director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, is hopeful the 2023 version of the bill will get passed. "This is the most important wildlife conservation legislation in half a century," LaBarbera said. "Leading conservation groups in the Wisconsin Coalition for Recovering America's Wildlife Act applaud this commonsense, cost-effective approach that not only helps at risk wildlife but also benefits habitat used by game species. This historic bill will create local jobs, help wildlife and local communities, and improve the quality of life in Wisconsin."



Blue-spotted salamander

## Northwoods Journal Online

Do you want to read current issues of the Northwoods Journal online or catch up on past issues? Visit [www.marinetecounty.com](http://www.marinetecounty.com) and search for "Northwoods Journal." We can also send you an e-mail reminder when a new issue is posted online, or we can mail you a paper copy if you prefer. Email Anne Bartels, Information & Education Specialist, at [anne.bartels@marinetecountywi.gov](mailto:anne.bartels@marinetecountywi.gov) or call 715-732-7780.





## Dinner from the Dirt! Getting Food from Underground

<https://mdc.mo.gov/magazines/xplor/2023-05/dinner-dirt>

### Soiled Spaghetti

An American robin hops quickly across the grass, stopping often to cock its head to look and listen. When it spies an earthworm at the surface, a tug of war begins! If the worm loses, it becomes the bird's breakfast. Though the robin usually wins, it's not entirely a one-sided fight. Stiff hairs, called setae (*see-tee*), circle each segment of the worm's wiggly body. The bristles anchor the earth-eater in place, making it tough to tug it out of the ground.



### Grimy Grub

An eastern mole couldn't see dirt if it were buried in it. The tiny tunneler's eyes are sealed shut and covered with fur. But who needs sight when you're always in the dark? Instead, a mole uses its oversized front paws to claw through the earth with a swimming motion. While it digs, its pointy snout wiggles about, sniffing and feeling for food. Creepy-crawlies that cross its path — like this June beetle grub — soon become snacks (eastern moles live in central and southwestern Wisconsin). **In Marinette County, we have the Star-nosed mole (below), the fastest eater on the planet!** Its 'nasal rays' help it identify and eat its food in less *than a quarter of a second*, and can eat 10 mouthful-size chunks of earthworm, one at a time, in *2.3 seconds, or 0.23 second a chunk!* Its range includes most of Wisconsin.



### Lots o' Legs

*Crunch!* A smooth green snake takes a bite out of a centipede. Smooth green snakes are found in moist, grassy areas, usually in prairies, pastures, meadows, forests, marshes, and lake edges. They are most often found on the ground or climbing in low bushes, and hide beneath rocks, logs, and other debris. They are active from April through October and in winter they hibernate with groups of other snakes. Smooth green snakes eat mainly insects and prefer crickets, grasshoppers, and caterpillars, but will eat other invertebrates like slugs, snails, spiders, centipedes, and millipedes.



### Lunch on the Run

This white-footed mouse better run faster! There's a hungry weasel hot on its tail. Barely bigger than a bratwurst, a least weasel (top next column) is the *world's smallest meat-munching mammal*. But don't let its tiny size fool you. The pint-sized predator's skinny body is perfectly shaped for pursuing prey in tight spaces. It can even squeeze through holes less than 1 inch wide.



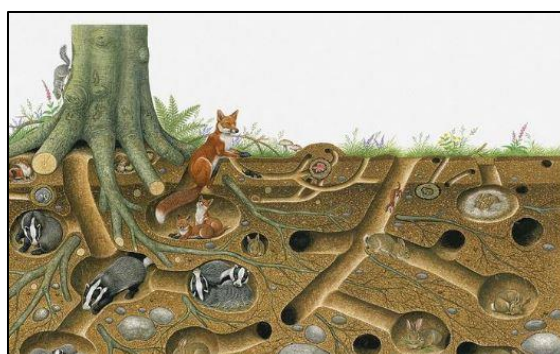
### Slithery Snack

When threatened, a northern ring-necked snake curls its tail into a corkscrew and shows off its brightly-colored underside. The bright tail is a decoy, used to lure predators away from the snake's helpless head. But the trick probably won't work on a hungry short-tailed shrew. About as long as your pinkie, this tiny mammal produces venomous spit that paralyzes small prey like insects and slows the heart of larger victims like small snakes.



### Poached Eggs

A few hours ago, a sizable snapping turtle crawled out of its mucky marsh, lumbered across the land, and dug a hole. Inside, the mama turtle laid several dozen leathery eggs. But the scent of disturbed dirt has given away her buried treasure. A masked bandit followed its nose to the nest and is now enjoying an *egg-cellent* feast. Raccoons, skunks, and other egg-eaters can be a huge problem for turtles. In some areas, they gobble up eight out of ten nests. Below is a predated nest, showing the egg shells scattered all around.



## Summer Bucket List for Kids!

<https://www.thebestideasforkids.com/summer-bucket-list-for-kids/>

Summer can be filled with a lot of free time for kids being out of school. If you are expecting to hear, "Mom, I'm bored!" then we have the perfect summer activity for you. Here is a summer bucket list for kids with over 100 ideas to get you started. Print this off and get your kids excited to check off some of these fun ideas!



**What is a bucket list?** It's a list of experiences you want to achieve in a lifetime or in this case, during the summer. We really love them for summer as it helps to overcome the teen or kid boredom that often arises. It can empower kids to make or plan their own fun, and a lot of these ideas are great for getting kids outdoors!

- Go fishing
- Go rock hunting
- Go on a nature walk
- Stargaze
- Build a sandcastle
- Catch fireflies (catch and release)
- Watch fireworks
- Play frisbee
- Watch the sunset at the beach
- Watch a thunderstorm
- Collect seashells
- Bonfire and S'mores



There are also so many arts and crafts ideas including:

- Make homemade slime
- Make handprint art
- Make suncatchers
- Make paper bag puppets
- Make tie-dye Shirts
- Make paper boats
- Make story stones or garden art stones
- Make a bird feeder
- Make bubble art

Who doesn't love a fun excursion in the summer? Have fun checking these ideas off your summer bucket list!

- Drive-in movie theatre
- Visit an aquarium
- Go to a children's museum
- Go to a water park
- Go to the library
- Visit national monuments
- Visit A Farmer's Market

Summer is time off of school but kids will still love these learning activities and challenges:

- Read at least 10 books
- Do a scienceProject
- Learn Origami
- Start a summer journal





## 6 Perennial Plants with Year-Round Bird Benefits

<https://www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/attracting-birds/plants-and-trees-that-attract-birds/perennial-plants-bird-benefits/>

By offering food and shelter for birds, these perennial plants, from flowers to large trees, shine at different times of the year.



Cedar Waxwing on Serviceberry

### Serviceberry

*Amelanchier* spp., Zones 2 to 9

This native perennial plant is one of the earliest sources of summer fruit for birds (above), and it hosts caterpillars. It's white spring flowers are followed by small berries that turn red to purple as they ripen in summer. Growing needs: Serviceberry grows 10 to 25 feet tall when in full sun and the lightly moist or damp soil it prefers. It tolerates some shade.



### Columbine

*Aquilegia vulgaris*, Zones 3 to 8

Hummingbirds love the bright spring flowers of this perennial plant which show up around the same time as daffodils and tulips. The bell-shaped blossoms are backed by spurs that contain nectar that hummingbirds need. Growing needs: Columbines prefer partial shade and thrive in woodland wildflower gardens. For another burst of green, cut the plant back to encourage new foliage.



### Elderberry

*Sambucus nigra canadensis*, Zones 3 to 9

The flowers on this shrub provide nectar and are followed by tasty berries appearing in late summer. Give this shrub plenty of room to spread and grow, then watch as butterflies and bees gather on flowers and birds flock to the ripe fruit. Elderberry suckers form large and lush thickets, which are perfect hiding spots for songbirds. Growing needs: Although it prefers full sun and moist soil, it tolerates drier conditions once it's established.



Tiger Swallowtail and Great Spangled Fritillary on Blazing Star

### Blazing Star

*Liatis* spp., Zones 3 to 9

The purple flower spikes attract hummingbirds and then turn to seed in fall. The nectar of this spiky plant is a butterfly favorite, especially when it comes to the silver-spotted skipper. Once the flowers fade, birds favor the seeds. Blazing star reaches up to 6 feet tall, but some cultivars, like Kobold, are much shorter, measuring roughly 18 inches. Growing needs: Blazing star can be planted in poor soil, but needs plenty of sun. Many species are native to the eastern U.S. Read more about how these [blazing star attracts butterflies](#).



### Autumn Inferno Cotoneaster

*Cotoneaster* 'Bronfire', Zones 5 to 7

Look no further for a fiery fall accent. Autumn Inferno is a shrub that offers fiery red fall foliage for you and small red berries that birds can't get enough of. They attract berry-eating birds like robins, bluebirds, and cedar waxwings. Growing needs: It grows about 5 feet tall and is a great privacy hedge. Grow it in full sun to part shade.

### Holly

*Ilex* spp., Zones 5 to 9

Its long-lasting berries are an important winter food source. Among the many bird-attracting species are the American holly tree (*I. opaca*), Zones 5 to 9, and the winterberry shrub (*I. verticillata*), Zones 3 to 9. Many also have attractive foliage, especially the variegated cultivars. Growing needs: American holly can be planted in full sun to part shade, is low maintenance, and tolerates clay soil.



## Fantastic Red Fox Facts!

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/facts/red-fox> & <https://www.growkido.com/red-fox-facts-for-kids/>



🦊 Red foxes are extremely agile animals. They are known to jump quite a few feet in the air and this is the first thing that the babies learn when it comes to hunting.

🦊 Red foxes even look like some of your favorite pets. They're canines, which are relatives of dogs, wolves, and coyotes - but in some ways, they're more like cats! They have long whiskers, retractable claws, and excellent night vision. Also like cats, red foxes hunt alone rather than in wolf-like packs.

🦊 Red foxes have a long, red, bushy tail with a white tail tip. This tail is the characteristic feature of these foxes, and are almost half the length of their bodies. The bushy tail is often used by the foxes to cover their bodies in case the weather gets too cold. The tail also helps them with balance.

🦊 Red foxes are not always red in color. Even though they are called *red* foxes, there are a lot of subspecies of this animal, and all have different variations in color. In fact, there can be drastic differences in the colors of the subspecies. For example, grey, blackish-brown, platinum, amber, and sometimes even morphed white!



This is a morph of the Red fox, named for the sprinkling of white (frosted) guard hairs in an otherwise black coat.

🦊 Red foxes have excellent hearing - they can hear rodents digging miles underground.

🦊 These animals have more than 20 different calls.

🦊 A group of foxes is called a skulk or a leash.

🦊 Kits stay with their parents for about seven months.





## Project Works to Boost Monarch Butterfly Population

<https://www.wpr.org/uw-madison-project-works-boost-endangered-monarch-population>



What started in a lab in the 1990s has evolved into a mass volunteer effort to track the monarch butterfly. Karen Oberhauser was a professor at the University of Minnesota when she and her students started collecting data on the monarch butterfly population in 1996. The next year, they started recruiting volunteers to help what became the international [Monarch Larva Monitoring Project](#).

"The goal of the project is to collect data on monarchs during the breeding phase of their annual migratory cycle," Oberhauser said. "What the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project does is track the distribution of monarchs throughout that northern breeding range and also their abundance."



Four years later, she moved to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The project is now run jointly by the [UW-Madison Arboretum](#) and the [Monarch Joint Venture](#). In 2013, Oberhauser was named a White House Champion of Change for Citizen Science for her work.

Volunteers go out into milkweed patches — in their backyards, nature centers, along a road by a school, anywhere — and count the number of eggs and caterpillars they see on the plants. They monitor at least 10 milkweed plants on a weekly basis and track the number of monarchs per plant.

The effort has hundreds of volunteers across the country. Yet the monarch population is declining, a trend Oberhauser has seen over the last 30 years. "I feel like anything that we see in our lifetime, to a human, feels rapid. So I've been studying monarchs since the 1980s, and I've seen a huge decline," Oberhauser said. "I am worried that it feels fast when it's in a lifetime. And if this decline continues, then they'll be gone." ***Just last year, the monarch butterfly was classified as an endangered species by the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#).***



Karen Oberhauser and volunteers monitor monarch population in a field in Wisconsin.

### Habitat loss, climate change threaten 'iconic' species

Every year, millions of monarchs migrate south, where those east of the Rocky Mountains settle in Mexico and those west overwinter in California. ***During the 2022-2023 winter season, the Eastern migratory monarch butterfly population plunged by 22 percent, [according to data from the World](#)***

**Wildlife Fund.** Researchers with those groups pointed to deforestation, widespread herbicide application and extreme weather conditions as reasons for the decline in numbers. On top of that, Oberhauser said volunteers are seeing year-to-year variations in the population mostly driven by extreme weather conditions. "Hot and dry conditions are bad for monarchs. Cold and wet conditions are bad for monarchs," she said. "Really, the best year for monarchs is a year that gets enough rain but not too much. And that is warm, but not too warm."

Julia Whidden, citizen science coordinator at the UW-Madison Arboretum, described monarchs as iconic and charismatic creatures, saying their wide recognition makes their decline even more concerning. "If this species is in decline, think about what it represents for all of the species that we're not paying attention to, that don't have so much public engagement and investment," she said.



While the overall population is declining, Whidden said the Western population is in greater peril because its numbers are falling at a faster rate. The Western population has fallen by about 99.9 percent — from 10 million to 1,914 butterflies — between the 1980s and 2021. The eastern population has dropped by 84 percent from 1996 to 2014, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

One bright spot: the Western population saw a significant rebound last year, with more than 335,000 butterflies being counted. Whidden said monarchs are especially vulnerable to regional climatic changes because of the different habitats they depend on. "It's not like they just live in this one small area where we can model exactly what's going to happen there," Whidden said. "They cover just a huge swath of land, so that definitely makes conservation more challenging in the face of climate change."

### Restoring monarch habitat key to growing their population

Despite the monarch population falling, their habitats can be restored. "We have the opportunity to provide more habitat and bring the population up to what it used to be," Oberhauser said. Whidden and Oberhauser offered different ways the public can help, like planting native milkweed and nectar plants to create more habitat for the species. North America is home to more than 100 species of milkweed, one-fourth of which are host plants for the monarch, according to the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#).

People can also join the effort and monitor the species at home." You can provide really, really valuable data from your backyard," Whidden said. "Monitoring is hugely helpful because monarchs have such a huge range." The UW-Madison Arboretum also has a program called "Journey North," where people can report monarchs they see in the spring and fall. "We know what's driven this decline in monarch numbers, so we know what we have to do." Oberhauser said.

## Make a DIY Butterfly Puddler

<https://www.birdsandblooms.com/backyard-projects/diy-butterfly-puddler/>



Most of us see backyard butterflies fluttering in bright sunny gardens but, occasionally, you'll find groups in unexpected places like a patch of mud, sandy riverbank or a DIY puddle station, which is called a **butterfly puddler**. Butterflies need sweet nectar from gardens to give them energy, but they also need the nutrients from these soggy areas.

Help butterflies, especially during dry weather, with a DIY backyard butterfly puddler spot.

1. Find and fill a shallow dish or container with soil or sand. Add a few flat rocks to provide perching spots (above).
2. Pour enough water in the container to moisten the soil, and sprinkle some salt on the surface. Also set out overripe fruit like bananas and oranges.
3. Keep the soil moist during the heat of the day, when butterflies are more likely to visit.

### What Is Butterfly Puddling?

Butterfly puddling is when a butterfly visits and gathers nutrients from a puddle, usually as part of a larger group. A closer look will reveal they are likely males. "Male butterflies, just like any living creature, are trying to ensure they reproduce," explains Ryan Fessenden of the Florida Museum of Natural History's Butterfly Rainforest. "One of the ways they do that is by passing on nutrients, along with genetic material, to the females when they are mating. Male butterflies gather those nutrients by drinking water from wet spots on the ground, collecting various minerals and nutrients such as sodium and amino acids," Ryan says.



### Where Do Butterflies Puddle?

And it's not just the mud that attracts butterflies. Like other animals, butterflies need salt in their diet, and they find it in some very unexpected spots. "You may find a butterfly seeking out these valuable nutrients in other unusual locations, such as in tears on a crocodile or in sweat on human skin," Ryan says. They're also drawn to less savory items such as decaying flesh and excrement. Off-putting as it may seem, these behaviors are vital to their survival. That's why you may see huge swarms of dozens or even hundreds of butterflies when a good puddling spot appears. "The more males that can gather nutrients, the more success the species will have reproducing," Ryan says. "So when a wet spot or puddle is found by one, other butterflies will notice and join in."





## Help Wildlife by Avoiding Use of Rodenticides

<https://www.wildlifecenter.org/rodenticide-poisoning-wildlife>



**Rodenticides** are a type of poison commonly used by homeowners and pest control companies to get rid of unwanted rodents. These poisons work by preventing a rodent's blood from clotting, causing them to bleed internally, but they don't just work on the rodents they target. Rodenticides are just as lethal for any animal that consumes the poison. Each year, thousands of non-target wildlife species are killed when they directly or indirectly consume rodenticides.

Rodenticide poisons are designed to smell and taste good to rodents to entice them to eat it, but they can be just as appealing to wild animals, including squirrels, opossums, skunks, raccoons, and foxes. Once consumed, these poisons will have the same anti-coagulation effect on wild animals as they do for rodents, causing internal bleeding, cardiovascular shock, and eventually death. In addition to the threat to wildlife, rodenticides also pose a significant risk to pets and children. Each year, rodenticides are one of the most common poisons that cats, dogs, and other household pets ingest, and over 10,000 children are exposed to rodenticides in the United States.

### Alternatives to Rodenticides

The following are some safe, environmentally friendly ways to solve rodent problems around your home or business.

- Seal entry points into your home
- Secure food resources that might attract rodents into your home
- Make sure shredded paper or fabric is not easily available - rodents often use these for nesting materials
- Use botanical rodent repellants - these products can be very effective at repelling rodents
- Never use glue traps – they are indiscriminate and inhumane
- Attract raptors to your yard by putting up nest boxes, planting trees, and leaving dead trees up

## Teaching Outdoor Awareness & Discovery (T.O.A.D.) Programs from the School Year into Summertime

Anne Bartels, Land Information Department



Anne Bartels talks with Crivitz 3<sup>rd</sup> graders about how some animals use the underground as a habitat in the "Chipmunk's Tunnel" in the Children's Learning Garden at the Harmony Arboretum on County Road E.

It's been a busy school year with environmental education programming throughout the County, but the school year is done and I will be \*slightly\* less busy this summer! I am back to around pre-COVID levels for presentations (159 programs and 4,471 participants so far this year) and this summer I have quite a few public programs/events scheduled.

In mid-June, I helped at the WI Land + Water Middle School Conservation Camp, held at the 4H Upham Woods Youth Camp in Wisconsin Dells (51 participants). Several library programs are scheduled throughout the County for this summer, as well as an appearance at the Marinette Logging & Heritage Festival on July 8 at Stephenson Island. Other programs are scheduled for several day care facilities, the YMCA, Goodwill Possibilities, and at Harmony Arboretum.

I will also be helping with a few area pollinator gardens from the 2020-2021 Pollinator Invitation Garden Project ("P.I.G. Project") and working on improving and installing a few more around Marinette County. In early June, I installed a P.I.G. garden at the Wausaukee Library's new location. Other established gardens available for public viewing are located at the UWGB-Marquette campus, the Community REC center, Red Arrow Park, the hwy. 64/180 roundabout, and Inferno Fitness in Marinette; Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Peshtigo; Wausaukee School; and Crivitz Elementary School.



Above: installation on 6/2; below, the garden on 6/10.



For more about the T.O.A.D. program, visit <https://www.marinettecounty.com/departments/land-information/environmental-education/toad/>.

## Life Jackets Save Lives!

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/76581>



The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) urges all water enthusiasts to wear a life jacket any time you are on the water, because it could save your life.

Before you cast off, perform a general boat check to make sure it's ready to launch. Look all other safety equipment is on board, lights are functional, registration is current, engine cut-off lanyard and plug are present – and don't forget to make sure you have one life jacket per person on board.

"When something goes wrong, it's too late to put a life jacket on if you aren't already wearing it," said Lt. Darren Kuhn, DNR Boating Law Administrator. "Wardens have responded to numerous drowning deaths only to find a life jacket stuffed inside a kayak or floating near the capsized canoe." The department does not track all drownings – only those fatalities linked to the use of a recreational activity item, such as a boat, kayak or canoe. The DNR posts boating incident reports on its website.

Today's life jackets are more comfortable, lightweight and stylish than the bulky orange style of the past. There are innovative options, such as inflatable life jackets, allowing mobility and flexibility for activities like boating, fishing, paddling or hunting and are cooler in the warmer weather.



Follow the basic safety tips below and enjoy Wisconsin's great lakes and rivers with family and friends.

- Sign up now to take an online boater education course.
- Always wear a properly fitted life jacket that has a snug fit and is fastened when you're on or near the water. Life jackets will keep you on top of the water if you walk off an unexpected drop-off, or a wave or current overpowers you or you fall out of a boat.
- Enjoy the waters sober and know your limits. Alcohol blurs a person's judgment, reaction time and abilities.
- River shorelines and sandbars pose unseen dangers. Higher, fast-moving water can overpower an individual's boating, paddling and swimming skills.
- Keep an eye on the weather and let someone know where you are going.

Be ready for the unexpected and always wear your life jacket. [More boating safety tips are available on the DNR website.](#)





### Wise Watering Tips for this Summer!

<https://www.facebook.com/Champaigncountynergardeners>

It has been a dry spring and many parts of central Illinois have suffered drought conditions. Plants need about 1-1 ½ inches of rain per week and when it doesn't come, gardeners need to provide supplemental water. So how can we provide water for our plants and at the same time be good stewards of the environment? By following wise watering practices, we can save time and money, grow healthier plants, and help conserve water.



Wise watering practices include:

1) Water only when and where needed. Plants that have not yet established their root systems (recently planted and seedlings) need more water than established plants. Know your plants' water needs – which ones prefer moist soil, and which prefer dry soil. Watch for wilting. Be aware of microclimates that impact water needs. During extended periods of drought even trees, shrubs, and established perennials need water.

2) Water slowly and deeply rather than frequently and shallowly. Deep watering develops deeper roots that will better tolerate dry spells.

3) Water the base of plants and avoid getting the foliage and fruit wet. Water on leaves promotes disease especially if the foliage remains wet overnight. This is best accomplished using drip irrigation, soaker hoses, or hand watering at the base of plants.

4) Water in the morning (6-9 AM). This reduces loss of moisture through evaporation and allows the leaves to dry if they get wet.

5) Mulch the soil to conserve moisture. A layer of organic mulch slows drying of the soil.

6) Use sensors or smart controls on automated irrigation systems to monitor rainfall and turn on only when needed. Existing irrigation systems can often be retrofitted with a monitoring device.

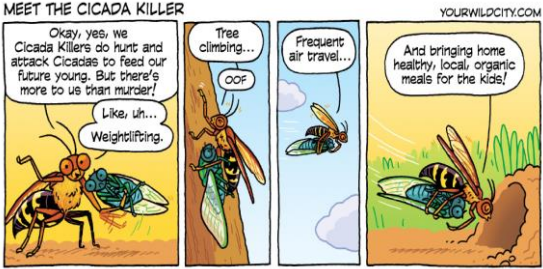
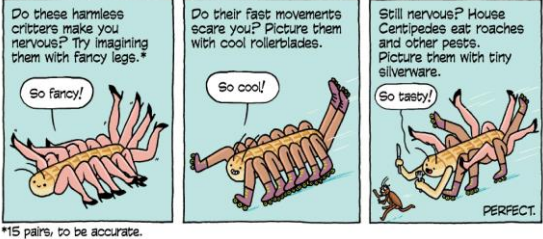
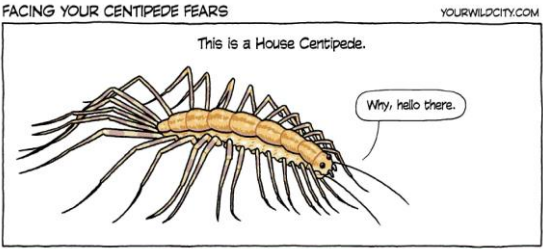
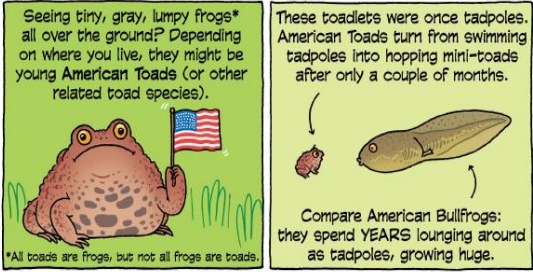
For more long-term water conservation, select new plants that are drought tolerant. Native plants can be a good choice since they are adapted to the climate of their origin, and many develop deep root systems. Add compost to the soil. Increasing organic matter increases the water holding capacity of the soil. Consider installing and using a rain barrel.

For more information about wise watering practices, visit:

- <https://extension.umn.edu/how/water-wisely-start-your-own-backyard>
- <https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/2017/06/proper-watering-procedures>
- [https://www.chicagobotanic.org/plantinfo/wise\\_watering](https://www.chicagobotanic.org/plantinfo/wise_watering)



### And now for something completely different...funny – yet educational - nature cartoons!



### Harmony Arboretum Schedule of Events & Master Gardener Presentations



Located seven miles west of the City of Marinette off Highway 64, then ½ mile south on County E. All programs are free and at Harmony Arboretum unless otherwise stated. For more information, call UW-Extension at 715-732-7510 or Land & Water Conservation at 715-732-7780.

#### 'Ask a Master Gardener' Education Series

- GOURDS, Thursday, July 13 at Harmony, before membership meeting, 6:00 PM
- MUSHROOMS, Friday, July 21 at Field & Forest, Harmony, late morning – details to come.

Visit the Northern Lights Master Gardener Association, Inc. on Facebook for more information:

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Northern-Lights-Master-Gardeners-Association-Volunteers-NLMGA-100064749904702/>



**Astronomy Nights** – upcoming stargazing programs led by Anne Bartels, Information and Education Specialist in the Marinette Co. Land Information Department. Learn about the night sky and watch for constellations, meteors, satellites, & more! Hot cocoa/tea/coffee & handouts provided. If it's mostly overcast or there is inclement weather, it will be cancelled. Dress for the weather.

- Thurs. 8/25, 8:30-9:45p
- Thurs. 10/20, 7-8pm
- Tues. 11/14, 5:30-7p

#### More information about Harmony:

- <https://www.marinettecounty.com/departments/land-information/environmental-education/harmony-arboretum/>
- <https://marinette.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/harmony-arboretum/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/p/Northern-Lights-Master-Gardeners-Association-Volunteers-NLMGA-100064749904702/>

